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A Pioneer Farm Home in Illinois
A LETTER DESCRIBING THE ENTRY OF THE LAND AND ITS
SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

BY PALMER D. EDMUNDS

Chicago, April 14, 1917.

Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber, Secretary,
Illinois State Historical Society,
Springfield, Illinois.

My dear Mrs. Weber:

I enjoyed very much, indeed, your kind letter of recent date. Noting in it your desire for a further description of the old land patent which I described to you, and an account of Henry Bailey, to whom it was issued, and also of my family, I am making as full a reply as my sources of information will permit. The patent itself reads as follows:

“James Monroe, President of the United States of America. To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Know ye, that in pursuance of the acts of Congress appropriating and granting land to the late army of the United States, passed on and since the 6th day of May, 1812, Henry Bailey, having deposited in the General Land Office a warrant in his favor numbered 42, there is granted unto the said Henry Bailey, late a private in Ketchum Company of the Twenty-fifth Regiment of Infantry, a certain tract of land containing 320 acres, being the East half of Section 31, Township 8 North, in Range 5 West, in the tract appropriated (by the acts aforesaid) for military bounties in the Territory of Illinois; to have and to hold the said half section of land with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Henry Bailey, and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof I have caused these letters to be made patent and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereto affixed.

Given under my hand at the City of Washington this twentieth day of January in the Year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and Eighteen and of the Independence of the United States of America the forty-seventh.

By the President,

JAMES MONROE.

JOSIAH MEIGS,

(Seal of the General
Land Office)

Commissioner of the Gen-
eral Land Office."

I am sorry to say that I am unable to find any account of Henry Bailey or the services which he rendered. All I know is that he received the land as a bounty, together with all the other soldiers who were granted similar tracts in the military tract district. It seems that he never lived upon it, because at the time my grandfather acquired it the native sod was undisturbed. The date at which the land described in this patent passed into the hands of my grandfather is sometime later than I thought when I wrote you before. He acquired it in 1847. He had been in this part of Illinois, however, for a considerable number of years before. In 1835 my great-grandfather, Obadiah Edmunds, visited western Illinois, and this vicinity in particular, and entered prairie land for future home. It was about six miles from the Mississippi River.

In the spring of 1836 the family came west with ox teams by land to Illinois. My grandfather, Daniel Edmunds, who was then twenty years old preferred to work and earn money on his trip, in order to be able to purchase some land himself. So he went to Wheeling, West Virginia, from Salem, Ohio, where the family had been living, and secured work on a coal barge going down the Ohio River. His wages were \$1.00 per day. It took some weeks to float down as far as Natchez, Mississippi. From there he came up the Mississippi to St. Louis, working as fireman on a steamboat. When he reached western Illinois he had in these ways earned sufficient money to enter eighty acres of government land at \$1.25 per acre. This part of Illinois was new and sparsely settled. He and his father built the second house erected in Township 8 North, Range 5 West of the Fourth Principal Meridian. He improved the land which he purchased as rapidly as possible. About two years later he entered into the lumber business, being

associated with Horatio Curts, on the upper Mississippi River, when Wisconsin was a territory. They brought lumber down the Mississippi by rafts as far as St. Louis and sold it. At the time when the Mormons were building their temple at Nauvoo they established a lumber yard at that point, where they did considerable business. In 1847 this lumber business was closed out, and it was at this time that my grandfather, Daniel Edmunds, purchased the land described in the patent, and which adjoined the other land entered in 1836, and in the future devoted his attention to improving it. In 1848 he married and his children were all born on this farm. The land is still in the hands of his descendants, and my father, Amos Edmunds, whom I spoke of in my former communication as being a member of the General Assembly at the time General Palmer was elected to the Senate, still retains his interest in it. I was born there in 1890. Daniel Edmunds died in 1889.

I spoke of my great-grandfather, Obadiah Edmunds, as coming to Illinois from Salem, Ohio. Previous to living at Salem he lived in Chautauqua County, New York, having come there at a time when it was a very new and sparsely settled country. It was there that my grandfather, Daniel Edmunds, was born in April, 1816. This Obadiah Edmunds was the son of Obadiah Edmunds, Sr., who lived at Clarendon and Danby, Vermont, where the Edmunds family had been pioneer settlers. Obadiah Edmunds, Sr., served as a militia man during the Revolutionary War. In 1780 he married Sarah Williams, the daughter of Goliah Williams, and direct descendant of Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island. Goliah Williams had moved to that part of Vermont prior to the Revolutionary War and about the same time that James Edmunds, who is among the earliest of our family in this country, came there from Providence, where he was born. James Edmunds himself, the father of Obadiah, was a soldier in the Revolution, and others of his sons besides Obadiah were in the war as minute men and members of the regular army. The family records are not complete until about 1700, but it seems that the family were originally of English and Scotch descent.

This brief sketch may be of interest for the records of the society. I am sorry that I am unable to make it more comprehensive upon points which would be perhaps of particular

interest, and I hope some time to be able to amplify it further. If possible for me I shall be delighted to attend the meeting of the Historical Society, May 10th and 11th. I know that I should enjoy this very much, and would particularly appreciate the privilege of making your acquaintance.

With kind regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,

PALMER D. EDMUNDS.